Remembering Bill Dane

William J. Dane, one of the earliest members of the Victorian Society in America and part of the group that established the New York chapter, died July 13. He was 96 years old.

Bill Dane, as he was known, was part of the group that met in Margot Gayle’s home in the 1960s to organize activities of the fledgling Victorian Society in America. After the national organization moved its headquarters to Philadelphia, he remained active in it as well as in the local chapter. He served on the New York chapter’s board of directors from 1970 until 1992. He was its treasurer (1971-73, 1984-88) and vice president (1979-81). In 2002 the chapter honored him with a lifetime achievement award.

In 2005, the Victorian Society in America presented him with a special president’s award. That presentation noted he had actively supported many of the organization’s activities from its earliest days. He had a particular interest in the summer schools, and for many years served on the committee that organized and ran them. He was also an officer of the Summer Schools Alumni Association.

Bill was born May 8, 1915, in Concord, N.H. He began his college education at the University of New Hampshire but left in 1932 to join the Army. After the war he returned to college and earned a liberal arts degree. He later said he “didn’t have class” as to where that degree would lead him.

In the fall of 1945, he applied for a job at the Newark Public Library and was hired to be a clerk in its Art and Music Department. “I circulated books, shelved and moved materials,” he recalled, “and I picked up all kinds of information relating to the subject areas of art and music.” The library granted him leaves to study at various institutions. In 1950 he went to the Sorbonne and later to Harvard. He earned a master’s degree in library science from Drexel University and took more than 20 courses at New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts.

Bill remained with the Newark Public Library for 65 years, retiring in 2009. Over the years, his work and responsibilities changed as he expanded the library’s holdings to encompass a comprehensive survey of the graphic arts from the Renaissance to the 21st century. It was named The William J. Dane Fine Print Collection in 1997. In 2004, he set up the Gertrude Fine Prints Endowment Fund in memory of his sister. His initial contribution of $50,000 was augmented with $10,000 from the Dodge Foundation. Over the years, he curated more than 150 exhibitions at the library.

At one time he gave his job title as “the keeper of prints.” At retirement he was the supervising librarian of special collections. Active in many professional organizations, Bill co-founded the Art Library Society of North America in 1975 and was its first treasurer. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the organization in 1998.

Jack Taylor Died at 93

Legendary preservationist Jack Taylor died February 8 at the age of 93. A longtime VSNY member, he was honored with the organization’s lifetime achievement award in 2014. Taylor is perhaps best remembered for spearheading the drive to designate the Ladies’ Mile Historic District. The 1989 designation protects shops and department stores built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries between Union and 14th streets.

Taylor was also involved in efforts to protect Union Square and the campaign to preserve the 19th-century building at 327 E. 17th Street, which he expanded the library’s holdings to encompass a comprehensive survey of the graphic arts from the Renaissance to the 21st century. It was named The William J. Dane Fine Print Collection in 1997. In 2004, he set up the Gertrude Fine Prints Endowment Fund in memory of his sister. His initial contribution of $50,000 was augmented with $10,000 from the Dodge Foundation. Over the years, he curated more than 150 exhibitions at the library.

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Born in Manhattan on April 21, 1925, Taylor attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. His first job after college was with The Washington Post.

During the project’s Phase 1, encompassing the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island, the team surveyed 65 neighborhoods. They identified 1,356 properties at the Reconciliation Level and 605 at the Intensive Level, and they delineated 20 Historic Districts containing a total of 523 contributing resources. To identify community typologies, the team analyzed patterns and defined communities by the dominant historic themes reflected in the existing historic built fabric. The community types identified were labeled Maritime Economies, Resort Towns, Industrial Areas, Parks, Military Installations, Early 20th Century Suburbs, Late 19th Century Workers’ Housing and Institutions.

Once the community types were identified, challenges facing each typology became clearer. For example, the earliest form of Maritime Economies tends to be located on slightly higher ground and are hence more likely to face development pressures and encroachments from new high-density projects.

By contrast, Resort Communities developed adjacent to beaches and boardwalks, drawing visitors by ferry, train and later car. Many neighborhoods on the Rockaway Peninsula developed in this way, and properties are primarily bungalows, with some later 19th-century houses. These communities are...
vulnerable because of their proximity to the water, and their wood frame buildings often experience insensitive repairs, such as the stripping of detailing and recladding. The neighborhoods’ surviving bungalows, originally built as temporary homes, were not designed to withstand decades of harsh weather conditions. Within these communities, a number of important Victorian-era buildings were given Intensive Level analysis. In Throgs Neck in the Bronx, the Hawesnever/Huntington Mansion is a French Second Empire-style house now serving as a Catholic high school for girls. The Huntington property is one of the large family estates that comprised the Throgs Neck peninsula through the 19th century. The house’s overall form and details remain intact, in an area formerly known as a rural summer resort for wealthy city dwellers.

City Island, just north on Long Island, contains multiple commercial and residential buildings dating back to the 1800s. The Victorian-era properties represent maritime industries; the island was a center for commercial shipbuilding, oyster farming and, later, yacht clubs. On the historic business corridor, City Island Avenue, significant buildings range from mid-19th-century wood-frame Italianate-style structures to early 20th-century brick buildings. At 279 Island Avenue, a two-story, Italianate-style, mixed-use residential and commercial building was built circa 1886 by Captain Joshua Levinsky. Along Staten Island’s coast, highlights include a Second Empire-style house at 1500 Arthur Kill Road, constructed circa 1868 by local builder Andrew Abeles. The house has many quintessential Second Empire features, including a mansard roof, molded cornices, decorative wooden brackets along the eaves, gable dormers and a wraparound porch. These doorways are a rare example of Second Empire design.

In a loss to one of New York’s great Victorian-era landmarks, the city is planning to remove thousands of linear feet of historic bluestone sidewalk pavement from the perimeter of Sailors Snug Harbor on Staten Island. The Harbor, a National Register Historic District and National Historic Landmark, has only limited local landmark protection, including several of its buildings and interiors and a stone perimeter fence along Richmond Terrace and Snug Harbor Road. The bluestone extends for the entire frontage along these streets as well as on Henderson Avenue at the site’s southern border. The slabs probably date to the 19th century and add to the neighborhood’s historic character and sense of place. They will be replaced with white concrete.

The pavers physically abut the designated landmark fence, but the Landmarks Preservation Commission did not require any specific measures to protect the nearly half-mile-long fence during construction. It also did not use its status as the city’s preservation agency to work with the Departments of Transportation or Design and Construction on options that would have preserved and restored the bluestone, including the possibility of consolidating it near Snug Harbor’s public entrances, where it would have been most visible.

A program to salvage bluestone sidewalk pavers removed from non-landmark sites for reuse within historic districts has long been discussed by preservationists but never implemented.

Demarest Building Threatened

Despite staunch appeals from VSNY, the 29th Street Neighborhood Association and other community members for landmark designation of the Demarest Building at 339 5th Avenue (at 33rd Street), built in 1890 and designed by renowned architect Henry Hardenbergh, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has inexplicably deemed it to have insufficient surviving historic fabric. Daniel Garodnick, former City Council member, has called the Demarest’s fate “a political sore in his district. Columbia professor Andrew S.olkart described it to The New York Times as “one of those buildings that whenever I pass by, it makes me smile.” A recent visit showed thriving businesses in the storefronts, including a Wendy’s branch lined in photo-murals of historic protected New York landmarks. The innovative elevator has been modernized, but the original stairway and cornices remain intact, in an area formerly known as a rural summer resort for wealthy city dwellers.

For seven years the Merchant’s House Museum has been battling the proposed development of an eight-story hotel next door at 22-24 East 4th Street. The building could cause catastrophic damage to the fragile 187-year-old building, which the Landmarks Preservation Commission has designated on the exterior and interior. In September 2018, after protracted legal proceedings, the city approved the development. For these communities, current preservation designations or protections would not apply; however, the scale, community design and building typologies seem worthy of some form of recordation or zoning protections to help maintain the sense of place.

Through early 2020, in the project’s Phase 2, the team will continue to record historic architecture vulnerable to climate-change-related damage, in addition to determining potential resources that may have been missed in past surveys. This phase includes some neighborhoods of Manhattan and the Bronx, as well as municipalities in Westchester, Rockland and Orange Counties. Whether or not devastating storms sweep through again and rebuilding is needed, communities and outside experts will be better able to recognize and understand what has been built, what makes these vulnerable communities unique and ensure there are records of historic properties prior to any disasters.

Staten Island’s Bluestone Blues

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settling in New York in what became the largest of 1959 sparked an exodus that created today's THE MAKING OF CUBAN NEW YORK
SUGAR, CIGARS, AND REVOLUTION: please. No reservations required.
later to right: Cuban immigrants at a cigar factory, c. 1900 (photo: Mashable); the Bowery around 1901 (photo: Detroit Publishing Co./Library of Congress)

**LECTURES**

**NEW LECTURE FEE POLICY:** VSNY sponsors evening lectures at various venues, $5 for members, $10 for nonmembers. Cash only, exact change please. No reservations required.

**MARCH 10, 2023**

**WEST SIDE Y, 5 WEST 63RD STREET, PARKSIDE LOUNGE**

**RECEPTION AT 6:15, LECTURE AT 6:30**

**EVERYBODY'S Doin' IT:** SEX, MUSIC AND DANCE IN VICTORIAN NEW YORK

**Protestion was big business in New York up to World War I, and where sex workers plied their trade, there was generally dancing and music. Musicologist and author Dale Cockrell's lecture, based on his new book, Everybody's Doin' It: Sex, Music, and Dance in New York, 1865-1900 (W. W. Norton), will explore New York's Victorian meeting places where sex, drink, music and dance mingled. Spirited live music, whether played by a single pianist or a small band, was enjoyed nightly in hundreds of basement dives, dance halls, brothels and concert saloons. Crowds of multiethnic men and women danced wildly to intoxicating music—to the horror of the moralistic elite. This rollicking dime novel-dream incarnation of popular music, including ragtime and jazz and punk, and the development of risqué new dance styles. Cockrell's talk will illuminate the how, why and where of America's popular music and dance, and trace a buoyant journey from downtown Five Points to midtown Tin Pan Alley and all the way to Harlem.

**DECEMBER EVENING LECTURE, DETAILS TBD**

**A HISTORY OF THE VICTORIAN DOLLS' HOUSE: LIVING LARGE IN A SMALL HOME**

**Historian Eliza de Soto Mendez will explore the entrancing world of dolls' houses and furnishings, exploring their makers, artisanship and surprising cultural importance, via rarely seen photographs among other archival treasures.

**OTHER VICTORIANA EVENTS OF INTEREST:**

**OCTOBER 26, 1 TO 4 PM, BOUNDARABLE ON ARCHITECT MINARD LAFFEVER (1798-1854), FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY, 40 MONROE PLACE, BROOKLYN. FOR DETAILS: FUBB.ORG**

**OCTOBER 26, 2 TO 4 PM, WALKING TOUR OF TIN PAN ALLEY, THE OLD CHELSEA DISTRICT AND ENVIRONS CONDUCTED BY LAURENCE FROMMRER, PRESIDENT OF SAVE CHELSEA, STARTING AT THE HOTEL CHELSEA, 222 WEST 23RD STREET. FOR DETAILS: WWW.UPPERWESTSIDEHISTORY.ORG/UPCOMING-EVENTS.HTML**

**TOURS**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 8 A.M. (DAYLONG)**

**PLANTS AND PAINTINGS IN PHILADELPHIA**

This tour will focus on accomplishments that preceded the Victorian era. In the morning we will explore Bruckman's Garden, the oldest surviving botanic garden in this country. It was begun in 1757 by John Bruckman, a self-taught botanist who collected seeds and plants on extensive travels that took him north to New England, south to Florida and west to Lake Ontario. Back in Philadelphia, he nurtured them in the garden surrounding his house that borders on the Schuylkill River. In the afternoon we will see the exhibit "From the Schuylkill to the Hudson: Landscapes of the Early American Republic" at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. On display will be paintings by such Philadelphia artists as Charles Willson Peale, James Peale and William Russell Birch that depict the Wissahickon, Delaware and Schuylkill waterways. Works by several Hudson River School painters are also included in the exhibit, among them Frederic Edwin Church and Thomas Cole, who trained as artists in Philadelphia in the 1820s. Lunch at the Reading Terminal Market will be on our own.

**LIMITED TO 40 PARTICIPANTS FEES: $150 FOR VSNY MEMBERS, $160 NONMEMBERS PAID RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 10:30 A.M.-APPROX. 12:30 P.M.**

**THE BOWERY: NEW YORK CITY'S OLDEST STREET**

Native American foothold, Dutch farm road and site of the city's first few Black homesteads, the Bowery stretches 2.5 miles from Chatham Square to Cooper Square. An early social hub for the working class, gangs, gays and immigrant Irish, Italian, Chinese, Jews and Germans, it was "the most interesting place in New York" to Stephen Crane. It has important links to Washington, Lincoln, baseball, streetcars, tap dance, tattoo, Yiddish theater, vaudeville, Stephen Foster, Irving Berlin, Harry Houdini and even Mae West. A longtime home to rescue missions, it is also known for its affordable jewelry, lighting and restaurant supply districts. Its artists' community helped foster abstract expressionism, Beat literature, improvised jazz and punk rock. New York City's oldest, most architecturally diverse street, it is the site of the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. Despite that honor, it is one of the city's most endangered historic streetcapes.

**LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS FEES: $20 FOR VSNY MEMBERS, $30 NONMEMBERS**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 8 A.M. (DAYLONG)**

**CONSIDERING CONNECTICUT**

A tour of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme and a visit to a private home in Old Saybrook is in the planning stage.

**NOTE FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS:** Paid reservations are required and can be made via PayPal from our website (vsnynyc.org) or through checks sent to Tours, Manhattan Metropolitan Chapter VSNY, c/o 112 East 14th Street, New York, NY 10003. No refunds for cancellations. Meeting places will be provided with registration confirmation. Participating must be in good health, able to participate safely in the activities involved. Sites may have handicap stairs or kilos. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate fully, please contact us (info@vsnynyc.org or 212-969-2345). VSNY reserves the right to decline to accept or refuse to retain any person as a member of our tours at any time.

**UPCOMING-EVENTS.HTML**

**WALKING TOUR OF THE BOWERY: NEW YORK CITY’S OLDEST STREET**

**FUNDRAISER:**

The Victorian Society New York (VSNY), the oldest of numerous chapters now flourishing throughout the USA, is an independent nonprofit organization affiliated with the national society.

Membership contributions at any level help to provide the foundation for all that we do—from our lecture series, walking tours and excursions, to our grant and awards programs honoring worthy preservation projects in New York. Members also help provide scholarships to the Victorian Society in America Summer Schools for advanced study. Donations to the Margot Gayle Fund make possible monetary grants for preservation and conservation of Victorian material culture in our region.
Welcoming an Impressive New Group to Board of Directors

Caroline Drabik’s professional focus is the care, keeping and interpretation of historic house museum interiors, furnishings and decorations. She has worked as a curator, collections manager and advisor to professional and volunteer staff in charge of the site’s material culture assets and holdings. Until recently, she served as director of curatorial affairs for the Historic House Trust of New York City and its 23 member historic houses. Former positions include collections manager for the Merchant’s House Museum and curatorial fellow through the Kress Foundation. Caroline provides advocacy for and assistance to house museums and other small history organizations, with an understanding of the challenges and complexities of interpreting and caring for historic furnishings and decorations. Her appreciation of collections’ close relationship to architectural styles and function, their physical beauty and their intrinsic value to everyday life fuel her passion for the field. She currently provides curator services to historic houses and organizations through her newly created business, White Rose Curatorial Services. Clients include Old Westbury Gardens and the Greater Hudson Heritage Network. She holds a master’s degree in museum studies from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and a bachelor’s degree from Elms College. During her post-college studies in Peru, Italy, and her graduate studies in New York, she developed an affection and enthusiasm for the arts of the Middle Ages in Europe as the life bridge for classical influences which endure to the present.

Caroline reports that she joined VSNY’s board to support its mission and to share with colleagues. She lives in Malverne, New York, with her husband, Rick White.

Lynne Funk ADA is a licensed architect with 35 years’ experience across commercial, residential and institutional markets. Her work with her own company included renovations of historic structures, ranging from 19th-century townhouses to mid-20th-century modern storefronts. In 2018, she joined CCA, which provides architectural and engineering services focused on construction defect mitigation. For 15 years, her office was located in the Meatpacking District, where she contributed time and research to the successful push for historic district designation of Gansevoort Market. This experience enhanced her appreciation of mixed-use neighborhoods and led to an interest in entertainment districts, including Tin Pan Alley near Madison Square Park. Walking tours (given and taken) have been a lifelong passion, including her “Tribecca: Industrial Edge,” which explores the transformation of lower west Manhattan. Lynne’s other community-based activities include serving on the advisory council of the Hudson River Park Trust and volunteering at free kayaking sites on the Hudson. She lives on the Upper West Side, and among her favorite nearby haunts are the Riverside Clay Tennis Association’s courts. Lynne also loves to ski, sail and skate, she reports—“anything near, on or in water!” She was raised in Kentucky, attended the University of Kentucky’s College of Architecture and retains her love of horses and Southern cooking.

Jeremy Woodoff has worked for the City of New York since 1980, first at the Landmarks Preservation Commission as a city planner, director of environmental review and deputy director in the Preservation Department. Since 2005, he has worked in the tiny historic preservation office at the Department of Design and Construction. Before coming to New York, he served for three years as a community planner for the City of Savannah and was on the board of the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, which restored houses in the city’s Victorian Historic District for low-income residents. Jeremy spent his early years in Stuyvesant Town but found the East Village neighborhood, which he crossed en route to school, much more interesting. When he was 9, the family moved to Aiken, South Carolina, where he lived until leaving college. At Rockford College in Illinois, then Oberlin College in Ohio, and finally graduate school in city planning at Harvard University, Jeremy served for three years as a community consultant at the Department of Design and Construction. Before coming to New York, he studied in Prague, where his suspicions about possessing an affinity for scenic landmarks were confirmed.

Eli Sterngass is a fine art research associate at Gur Johns International, an appraisal firm based in New York and London. Raised in the historic summer resort town of Saratoga Springs, New York, he graduated from the University of Michigan in 2016 with a bachelor’s degree in anthropology, museum studies and art history. During his senior year, he studied in Prague, where his suspicions about possessing an affinity for scenic landmarks were confirmed. Following his return to New York, he worked for the National Trust for Historic Preservation at the Preservation Office, where he is a fan of horse racing and soccer (the British Premier League). Eli reports that he is pleased to make a difference in the community by assisting with VSNY’s work.

Mark Bench, a native of Manchester, England, has had a long career in the fine and decorative arts. Before moving to New York in 2007, he worked primarily at two international auction houses in London’s Mayfair. In London and New York, he has been actively involved with professional associations. For the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, he is a member of the Fine Art and Chattels Faculty. He has also worked with the Georgian Group (UK), an amenity society that advocates for all listed 18th- and early 19th-century buildings and landscapes, and the Victorian Society (UK), a statutory committee on alterations to listed Victorian buildings. He is a fellow of the Victorian Makers’ Company (UK), where he has promoted Britain’s finest handmade furniture. In New York, Mark has co-curated two exhibitions of contemporary Irish and American furniture and craft at the American Irish Historical Society, and he has been a trustee of the Victorian Society. He was recently invited to sit on the collections committee of the Delaware Art Museum. He lives on the Upper West Side with his wife, Aleya Lehmann, an artist who has spearheaded recent restoration of Verdi Square at the West 72nd Street subway (1, 2 and 3 lines) entrance. He reports that he is eager to contribute to VSNY’s dialogue, particularly related to landmarking initiatives.

$30 Young Victorians*
*Members age 25 and younger please provide a copy of your ID.
$40 Individual*
*Seniors and full-time students receive a $10 discount at this level. Please provide a copy of your valid ID.
$60 Dual*
*Seniors receive a $10 discount at this level.
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Additional Special Contribution(s):
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Visit www.vicsocny.org for complete list of benefits and to learn about Daniel O’Connell Badger Circle memberships.

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